

--49. The optimizer engine of Claim 41, wherein said means for solving assigns each of said multiple alternative pilot training plans a comparative value to assist in selecting an optimum pilot training plan.

--50. The optimizer engine of Claim 41, wherein said multiple alternative pilot training plans include pay protection, instructor and pilot staffing, schedule for hiring new hires, optimum number of new hires per position, training assignments, advancements, and releases.

--51. The optimizer engine of Claim 41, wherein said means for solving optimizes said variable value solutions by minimizing an objective function of said mixed integer programming model to have a minimum value within a region defined by constraints in said constraint lists.

--52. The optimizer engine of Claim 48, wherein said levels of importance are generated for block hour excesses, block hour shortages, pay protection costs, new hire costs, no award costs, and furlough costs occurring in said mixed integer programming model.

DISCUSSION

This Preliminary Amendment has been filed to more fully Claim the invention as described and illustrated in the Applicant's application, to correct obvious typographical errors and misspellings, and delete an unnecessary definition. No amendments have been made to overcome any known prior art.

In particular, the index "t" as defined to refer to "bid period" in Table II on page 12, is used inconsistently throughout the specification and Claims as indicated by references to "period" and "month". Such references have been corrected throughout the specification and Claims to consistently refer to "bid period".

In Table I on page 7 of the specification, in the definition for "Percentage Excess", the word "perce'ntage" has been corrected to "percentage".

In Table I on page 8 of the specification, an unnecessary definition for "Pay Protection" has been deleted as the term was previously defined on page 7.

On page 17 of the specification, the references in equation (7) to the term " Block_{ht} " have been corrected to " Blockhrs_{ht} " as defined in Table IV on page 14 of the specification.

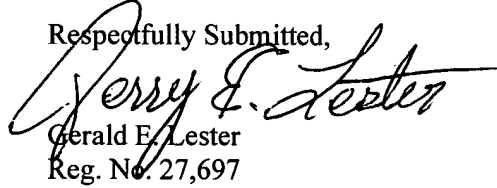
The definition of " Y_{NHht} " in Table V on page 16 has been changed to remove any suggestion of dependence on the index "i". Please refer to equation (10) on page 18 of the specification.

The remaining corrections are obvious typographical errors and misspellings.

Claims 40-52 have been added to more broadly claim the invention described and illustrated in the specification and drawings as originally filed.

Preliminary Amendment
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Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Lester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

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